



VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING HEALTH STATUS



A. MATERNAL, INFANT, AND CHILD HEALTH

Maternal Mortality

- Establish a systematic review of all maternal deaths to gather information for the development of preventive programs

Infant Mortality

- Implement the recommendations to reduce low birthweight rates (see Low Birthweight section below), since this is a leading cause of infant mortality
- Establish a systematic review of all fetal and infant deaths to gather information for the development of preventive programs
- Carry out public and professional education on risk factors for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Encourage the cessation of smoking and avoidance of second-hand smoke during and after pregnancy
- Extend home visiting and case management services to mothers who are high risk for an adverse outcome
- Organize a community-based approach designed to increase awareness and promote collaboration about issues central to effective infant mortality reduction
- Monitor status of pregnancy risk factors with the LOUISIANA PREGNANCY RISK ASSESSMENT MONITORING SYSTEM (LAPRAMS) and employ this information for policy development and implementation of appropriate, effective interventions

Low Birthweight

- Ensure access to prenatal care for all pregnant women, especially those with low incomes, teenagers, and those living in medically underserved areas
- Improve access to prenatal care by removing barriers and promoting non-traditional obstetrical practitioners in Louisiana (e.g., nurse midwives, nurse practitioners)
- Develop a system of prenatal screening for multiple risk factors (e.g., substance use/abuse, domestic violence, and depression) associated with poor pregnancy outcomes, so that identified women can be referred early for appropriate management
- Reduce substance abuse (including use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco) among pregnant women through public education
- Increase counseling and treatment services for substance-abusing pregnant women
- Increase WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM services for pregnant women
- Improve surveillance systems to gather information on risk factors in low birthweight pregnancies
- Increase support for Partners for Healthy Babies, which promotes healthy prenatal behaviors and early prenatal care through media messages and a toll-free hotline that links pregnant women with health care providers



- Initiate educational programs for healthcare providers and pregnant women on identifying the signs of premature labor
- Analyze data collected in the LAPRAMS database to assess preventable risk factors associated with low birth weight and to help identify effective and ineffective elements of existing efforts

Child Health

- Provide access to preventive health services (e.g., health screening, immunizations, parental education) to infants and children in low income families or to others who do not have access to such services due to geographic or financial barriers, or a lack of providers
- Enhance outreach efforts through the Covering Kids Initiative for the Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP) in order to increase access to health services
- Expand health system development efforts to all areas of the state to insure that all children have access to comprehensive health (primary and specialty), mental health, social, and education services
- Develop and implement statewide and community-based initiatives for the prevention of unintended injuries which are the leading cause of death in children over the age of one year

Child Abuse and Neglect

- Increase public awareness of child abuse prevention and positive parenting and promote parenting education in communities through the parish health units
- Expand home visiting services to families at high risk for child abuse and neglect, utilizing the Healthy Families America Program and the Nurse Home Visiting Model
- Educate health care providers in the assessment of the parent-child relationship for early detection of families that are at risk for child abuse and neglect

Child Care

- Promote health and safety in Out-of-Home childcare by utilizing childcare health consultants
- Provide expertise and leadership in the development and enhancement of childcare standards
- Sustain the coalition of state and local health professionals, government and community agencies, child care providers, and concerned citizens to address health and safety childcare issues
- Utilize a multi-disciplinary community approach to improve quality of these facilities
- Utilize child care health consultants to assist childcare centers to integrate children with special health care needs into their facilities

Teenage Birth Rates

- Facilitate the community's capacity to address teenage pregnancy through provision of information and resources
- Provide educational enrichment and economic opportunities to strengthen the family
- Involve both the public and the private sectors in developing community-centered, sustainable, collaborative, and adolescent-focused programs
- Encourage age-appropriate sex and family life education at home by parents



- Provide age-appropriate family life education in schools, focusing on abstinence and the delay of sexual activity
- Ensure access to information on safe sex practices and contraceptives
- Provide culturally appropriate, intensive, long-term programs that recognize family and community values
- Utilize a variety of approaches, including adult mentors, peers, and community members with similar backgrounds and experiences
- Utilize multi-disciplinary approaches involving teachers, health professionals, social workers, and community leaders
- Develop multi-message programs addressing school drop-out; real life options; job exploration, training, and placement; and individual and family counseling when necessary
- Provide comprehensive adolescent health clinics that are community-based, school-based, and/or school-linked
- Ensure youth involvement in program design, implementation, and evaluation

B. INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Emerging Infections

- Encourage appropriate and judicious use of antibiotics
- Conduct surveillance activities to identify disease trends, drug resistance patterns, and risk factors for acquiring infections
- Develop appropriate statewide guidelines for: the prevention, surveillance, diagnosis, treatment, and transfer of patients between health care facilities; infection control; and outbreak management
- Provide education and information to the public regarding newly emerging, re-emerging, and drug resistant infections, including the importance of limiting inappropriate antibiotic use

Hepatitis A

- Continue to inspect food establishments for proper sanitary procedures, including food handling, storage, preparation, and personal hygiene
- Continue to search for active cases of hepatitis A in order to identify outbreaks and provide preventive treatment
- Encourage the use of the hepatitis A vaccine in specific high-risk groups, such as overseas travelers
- Provide health consultation and education to child care providers in out-of-home child care settings regarding hepatitis A, its mode of transmission, and its prevention
- Provide education and information to the public regarding hepatitis A

Hepatitis B

- Vaccinate all newborns and early adolescents to prevent hepatitis B infection



- Vaccinate high-risk groups, including household contacts of hepatitis B carriers, to prevent hepatitis B infection
- Continue to search for active cases of hepatitis B to identify contacts at risk
- Provide education and information to the public concerning hepatitis B

Influenza

- Increase immunization with influenza vaccine among the high-risk groups, especially individuals over the age of 65, by increased education of health care providers and the public
- Continue active surveillance of influenza cases each year in order to inform health care providers and the public about the proper time to be immunized each fall
- Work with community groups that already reach poorly immunized groups to increase awareness of the benefits of influenza prevention

Tuberculosis

- Continue the practice of directly observed therapy (DOT) to ensure completion of therapy
- Expand surveillance for TB through liaisons with hospital infection control practitioners and private medical groups in high-incidence areas
- Enhance the capacity to provide field-based outreach and ensure thorough case and contact follow-up
- Ensure that the in-patient treatment facility at Villa Feliciana remains a treatment option for drug-resistant, recalcitrant, or other TB patients who require close supervision of therapy
- Assure prompt medical assessment of foreign-born persons entering the state with evidence of TB

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS

- Encourage condom use among persons who may have high-risk sexual behavior and increase distribution of and accessibility to condoms
- Provide STD and HIV testing and counseling, group educational sessions, and outreach to persons at high risk for STDs and HIV/AIDS
- Increase access to clinical services for people with STDs to ensure rapid treatment and thereby reduce spread of STDs and vulnerability to HIV
- Increase awareness of asymptomatic STD infection, especially gonorrhea and chlamydia in the young adult population, and the need to screen both men and women for those infections
- Enhance partner notification activities for syphilis, all other STDs and HIV/AIDS
- Enhance statewide efforts to promote syphilis elimination
- Continue support for public awareness and professional education regarding HIV/AIDS in pregnant women, the effective use of anti-retroviral drugs in preventing perinatal transmission, and education for all people regarding the public health threat of STDs and HIV/AIDS



C. ORAL HEALTH

- Continue to strengthen the fluoridation program infrastructure within OPH
- Continue to promote expansion of community water systems that adjust water fluoridation levels to optimal range for the reduction of dental cavities
- Ensure continuous monitoring of all public water systems that fluoridate and provide technical assistance for all public water systems operators
- Provide education to the public, policymakers, and dentists regarding the optimal water fluoridation status in Louisiana
- Provide statewide school nurse training on oral health screenings
- Assess utilization rates of pit and fissure sealants among third graders statewide
- Assess dental caries rates among third graders statewide
- Assess the urgency of necessary dental treatment for screened third graders statewide
- Provide dental referrals for needed treatment for the screened third graders statewide
- Increase access to pit and fissure dental sealants among school children in Louisiana
- Provide education to the public, policymakers, and dentists regarding current pit and fissure sealant utilization rates among populations at risk for dental caries
- Develop an oral health plan for the state
- Work with the DHH Bureau of Health Services Financing to increase Medicaid dental coverage for at-risk special needs populations
- Provide tobacco cessation training to future dental health care professionals

D. CHRONIC DISEASES

Cancer

- Advocate cessation of tobacco use
- Prevent initiation of tobacco use
- Encourage avoidance of second-hand smoke exposure
- Promote both increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, and grains and a reduction of fat in diet
- Promote increased regular physical activity and maintenance of optimal weight
- Advocate routine Pap smears for detection of cervical cancer in women age 18 and older
- Advocate mammograms at least every two years for women over age 50 and for women aged 40-49 with a mother, sister or child who has or has had breast cancer
- Encourage yearly colon cancer screening test for women and men over age 50

**Diabetes**

- Advocate maintenance of optimal weight levels and physical activity
- Increase intake of fruit, vegetables, and grains while reducing fat in diet
- Promote working continuously with a physician to control blood sugar levels and monitor hemoglobin A1c through regular testing
- Encourage adoption of healthy lifestyles
- Advocate maintenance of normal blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- Encourage annual retinal exams
- Promote daily inspection of feet
- Urge patients to have their feet checked annually
- Encourage annual influenza shots
- Encourage pneumococcal shots
- Promote daily self blood glucose checks

Heart Disease/Stroke

- Advocate cessation of tobacco use
- Prevent initiation of tobacco use
- Encourage avoidance of second-hand smoke exposure
- Promote increases in fruit, vegetable, and grain intake and reductions in fat in diet
- Promote increased regular physical activity
- Encourage maintenance of optimal weight levels
- Advocate blood pressure checks every two years
- Advocate blood serum tests to measure cholesterol levels every five years (if over age 35)
- Support discussion of estrogen replacement therapy with a physician for post-menopausal women

E. ALCOHOL, DRUG, AND OTHER ADDICTIONS**Prevention**

- Transition into research-based prevention programs statewide
- Maintain the sale of tobacco products to minors at a 10 percent or lower non-compliance rate through the Synar Program
- Continue the CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION'S State Incentive Grant activities empowering the Governor with enhanced capability to coordinate, enforce, and integrate effective prevention strategies into the state's Prevention Plan for its residents
- Develop and implement a compulsive gambling prevention curriculum in the school system and for elderly citizens statewide

**Treatment and Prevention**

- Close existing treatment and prevention gaps and provide a seamless system care through a comprehensive array of community-based treatment and prevention services for individuals with addictive disorders and those at risk for developing addictions
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of treatment and prevention initiatives through the implementation of best practices and on-going development of the workforce
- Provide a comprehensive array of prevention and treatment services to meet the needs of problem and compulsive gamblers
- Continue the development of recovery homes and therapeutic community models as part of the community-based treatment continuum

F. UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

- Promote policy and resources for the proper use of child safety seats, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, personal flotation devices (formerly known as life vests or jackets), helmet use, and other proven injury-reducing techniques
- Enforce policies regarding alcohol use and vehicles. Provide resources to prevent recidivism
- Establish social norms about the impropriety of letting others drive or pilot a vessel while intoxicated
- Establish social norms of lowest possible acceptable risk within housing, transportation, school, and playground environments (e.g., lighting, surface materials, bicycle-friendly roads, and signage)
- Promote policies and resources for supervision of children by responsible caretakers, including daycare centers, schools, sports teams, and playgrounds
- Provide resources for tested injury prevention actions
- Promote resources for a coordinated trauma system
- Provide resources to support a rigorous hospital discharge reporting system, requiring use of “codes” to provide information on injury events from emergency rooms and hospitals

G. INTENTIONAL INJURIES

- Support policies to reduce firearm injuries and deaths
- Support policies, and promote social norms about safer firearm storage
- Support policies and resources to reduce domestic and sexual violence
- Support social norms which repudiate violence against women
- Support policy and resources to protect and rehabilitate children who witness or experience violence
- Promote training and resources to reduce suicide



- Provide resources for and promote social norms that require personal safety and opportunities for rehabilitation for incarcerated youth and adults
- Support resources for a coordinated trauma system

Child Death

- Promote policies and resources for supervision of children by responsible caretakers
- Promote resources to identify and prevent child abuse
- Promote policies to provide “emotional detoxification” services for adolescents and adults abused as children
- Support policies requiring periodic re-training on investigating child deaths
- Support policies recommended by Child Death Review Panels

H. MENTAL HEALTH

- Assure the provision of a system of mental health services based on best practices, which is responsive to the assessed and self-identified needs of consumers, families, and the communities in which they live
- Provide the greatest impact on the quality of life for individuals within the state mental health system
- Provide quality services that are cost effective
- Provide person-centered care to meet the individual’s and family’s needs
- Provide a continuum of services in collaboration with multiple stakeholders
- Decrease the stigma associated with mental illness by increasing public education efforts
- Enhance consumer and family participation in the planning, delivery, and monitoring of services and settings, especially concerning suicide issues
- Focus education efforts on the depressed individual, impulsive adolescents, student populations, the elderly, the homeless, and the mentally or physically ill
- Treat each person served by the mental health system in a holistic manner with services tailored to meet their individual needs
- Educate and train all physicians to recognize the signs and symptoms of persons with mental illness and/or at risk for suicide, so that appropriate referrals can be made and/or intervention measures taken

